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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMBURGER (Netherlands)

later: Mr. RAMOUL (Algeria)
(Vice-Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. PINO (Venezuela) welcomed the holding of occasional dialogues on matters of key interest to the Committee, as they would make its work more dynamic, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 50/227. As development had become the key focus of the United Nations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the regional commissions and other United Nations bodies therefore could make a substantial contribution to the work on the agenda for development. The globalization and liberalization of the world economy called for the establishment of a multilateral trading system based on clear, equitable, transparent and non-discriminatory rules so that the developing countries could benefit from the process. Thus far, the gap between the developed and the developing countries had continued to widen, and it was therefore essential to anticipate the risks inherent in globalization and liberalization in order to prevent possible adverse effects and close the gap.

2. The international financial institutions also must gradually alter their structure and decision-making processes in order to facilitate participation by the developing countries in the design and implementation of the rules governing international financing. The importance which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) attached to the social component of development was most welcome. It was essential to strengthen the dialogue and relations between the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO), in particular on matters relating to global macroeconomic policy and development policies, and new conditionalities and restrictive policies must be avoided.

3. The United Nations must continue its efforts to ease the crushing burden of debt and debt servicing borne by the developing countries. His delegation welcomed the progress made with respect to the poorest and most heavily indebted countries. Analyses should be conducted on a case-by-case basis, with particular attention to countries with a high proportion of multilateral debt. Concessional, bilateral contributions from the developed countries were crucial in that regard, as was a favourable international economic environment, characterized by improved access to markets, stable exchange rates, effectively managed international interest rates, increased resource flows and access by the developing countries to technology.

4. The first ministerial conference of WTO, to be held in Singapore in December 1996, would provide a valuable opportunity to assess the outcome of the implementation of the agreements adopted at the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and to initiate a dialogue on pending issues. He underscored the importance of the complementary roles played by WTO and UNCTAD in facilitating the integration of the developing countries into the international trading system and welcomed their close and increasing cooperation. It was also imperative to maintain a healthy balance between trade and the environment; his delegation rejected the efforts by the developed countries to use concern for the environment as a pretext for imposing restrictive trading practices. Environmental standards agreed upon within the framework of UNCTAD and WTO

should be based on the principles of non-discrimination, transparency and predictability.

5. The forthcoming World Food Summit, to which his delegation attached great importance, would provide the first opportunity at the level of heads of State or Government to marshal the global commitment required for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and the achievement of food security for all.

6. Lastly, since strong democratic institutions and practices were indispensable for the smooth integration of countries into the liberalized global economy, the international community must mount a coordinated attack on corruption. His delegation called for adoption by consensus of the relevant draft declaration which was currently under consideration in the Economic and Social Council.

7. Mrs. BASHIR (Sudan) commended the representative of the Netherlands for drawing attention to the relationship between peace and development, and noted that the current policy of depriving States involved in conflict of development aid merely served to prolong war and suffering, and further exacerbate the discrepancies in development between different parts of a given country. The link between peace and development was particularly evident in her own country, where the quickening pace of internal peace had restored stability to large areas of the country.

8. Despite repeated commitments by the developed countries to increase their development assistance, the flow of such assistance had continued to decline; in addition bureaucratic preconditions for the provision of such assistance had increased. Some 80 per cent of the foreign capital flows had gone to only 12 States. As a result, the least developed countries, especially those in Africa, continued to be marginalized.

9. Food security and the avoidance of hunger were major concerns of Africa and of the world as a whole. Her country therefore looked forward to the forthcoming World Food Summit. It also looked forward to the special session of the General Assembly which was scheduled to make an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 in 1997.

10. Although 1996 had been declared as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the developed countries had done little thus far to implement the related decisions. Without waiting for aid, her own country had taken steps to eradicate poverty, concentrating its efforts on protecting workers and their levels of income, in particular through the creation of social protection funds. Development projects designed to combat poverty had also taken account of the need for environmental conservation and balanced development.

11. Although, like other developing countries, the Sudan had introduced many structural improvements designed to promote free trade, those measures had not elicited a similar response from the developed countries; instead, the latter had adopted further protectionist measures thereby causing the developing countries, particularly the least developed, to lose a major part of their export earnings. Their situation would not improve until the donor countries

lived up to their undertakings under the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, provided technical assistance, supported the decision adopted at Marrakesh on measures in favour of least developed countries and withdrew the environmental preconditions imposed on the exports of those countries. Her delegation hoped that the forthcoming Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Singapore, would mark a step forward in the attainment of those objectives.

12. Because of the inadequate or selective way in which it was being handled, the foreign debt crisis had long paralysed many countries. Her delegation welcomed the initiative of the World Bank to alleviate the debt burden of the poorer countries and hoped that that initiative would prove more effective than earlier ones.

13. Her country had supported General Assembly resolution 50/227 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Her delegation wished to emphasize the need to strengthen the United Nations machinery for providing development assistance and technical assistance to the developing countries and to reaffirm its appeal for higher priority to be given to regional and subregional organizations.

14. Her country appreciated the support it had been receiving from United Nations bodies and wished to continue its cooperation with them in the future. It was important that account should be taken of the priorities set by the countries concerned since the latter were, in many cases, in the process of carrying out economic reform programmes while simultaneously striving to achieve peace.

15. Mr. SYCHOU (Belarus) said that most of the problems facing the world - poverty, illiteracy, armed conflict and the spread of disease - were related to economic disparities between States and the deterioration of the environment. Over the past decade, the number of least developed countries had grown from 36 to 48, yet the total volume of economic assistance to those States had declined significantly.

16. Countries with economies in transition, including Belarus, remained in a difficult economic situation although a certain degree of stabilization had been achieved at a very low level. His country's transition was complicated by the expenses it was incurring in order to fulfil its commitments in the area of disarmament and recover from the Chernobyl disaster. The United Nations must take special measures to shorten the transition to a market economy and to promote the integration of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the world trading system. An international conference on the sustainable development of countries with economies in transition was planned for May 1997 in Minsk. The results of that conference should make a valuable contribution to the five-year review of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the special session of the General Assembly.

17. The restructuring of the activities of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227, should be the focal point for further reform efforts in that sector. The Council's role in coordinating the implementation of the programmes of action adopted at the recent series of

world conferences should be strengthened, and it should make greater efforts to secure new and non-traditional sources of financing.

18. One of the key factors in the development of the world economy was world trade conditions. Full participation by Central and Eastern European States with transition economies in WTO could considerably facilitate their transition, but a more flexible approach on the part of the industrialized countries would be needed. Belarus welcomed the agreement with the European Union on partnership and cooperation and looked forward to its early entry into force.

19. Mr. SZYMAŃSKI (Poland) said that sustainable development depended on peace and security at both the national and international levels. Political security and stability were increasingly dependent on such factors as poverty alleviation, social progress and environmental protection, and the interdependence between security and democracy, including human rights, was widely recognized.

20. The agenda for development should present a comprehensive approach to economic and social development, environmental protection and the improvement of standards of living. It should respond to the major objectives of, and the means available to, the international community and individual countries in an era of increasing globalization, liberalization and interdependence. Although some progress had been made in the negotiations on the subject, efforts should be intensified in order to provide a solid basis for international development cooperation in the years to come.

21. The experience of his country and others which had introduced basic economic reforms in tandem with systemic reforms confirmed that the successful pursuit of sustainable growth required that individuals be given the opportunity to be the active agents of change, that they must enjoy basic human rights and freedoms and that entrepreneurship should be encouraged. Attention must also be paid to the social aspects of development, so that the benefits of growth could be shared by all and poverty could be kept to a minimum. The transformation of the world economy also posed new challenges and uncertainties, underscoring the need for cooperation at the international, regional and local levels, while ensuring respect for the diversity among the cultures, ideas, values, aspirations and experience of all countries.

22. The developed economies usually were deemed to play a special role in global economic growth. However, other countries, including the newly industrialized countries, were making great strides and would be assuming an increasing role in supporting the development of other countries. Particular attention must be paid to developing countries in greatest need, in particular, the least developed countries.

23. His country was playing an active part in multilateral and bilateral negotiations with a view to achieving greater openness and an unconstrained flow of commodities, services, capital, technology, human resources, ideas and cultural patterns. It had made considerable progress in adapting to the requirements for membership in the European Union and had recently been admitted to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

24. Although there was no single policy which countries could adopt to guide them in transforming and modernizing their economies, the experience of his country could provide a useful example for developing economies which had begun to move towards greater efficiency and faced similar problems. The United Nations should promote international solidarity for development, strengthen economic ties among nations and promote international investment in the interests of peace and security, through increased flows of official development assistance (ODA), increased trade and the work of transnational corporations and international corporate alliances. All such assistance must be in support of national efforts.

25. In conclusion, he underscored the importance of continuing to improve cooperation between the agencies of the United Nations system, the international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization.

26. Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria) said that although greater globalization and liberalization of the world economy had led to the increased integration of world markets for goods and services, the policies adopted to achieve that globalization had widened the gap between the developed and the developing countries and had in effect weighted the international economic environment to the disadvantage of the developing countries, in particular, those in Africa. While the developing countries bore the primary responsibility for finding solutions to their economic predicament, their development efforts should be based on genuine interdependence and mutual cooperation with the developed economies in the context of global partnership rather than on the old donor-recipient relationship.

27. The effort to formulate a United Nations agenda for development assumed crucial significance in the implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon by the international community with the adoption by the General Assembly, at its eighteenth special session, of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries. Development should be approached in a comprehensive and action-oriented manner, and the work on the agenda for development should proceed with genuine acceptance of its value and the political will to promote international economic cooperation. The United Nations should play the central role in launching an intensive, sustained dialogue between developed and developing countries in a mutually reinforcing and beneficial partnership and on the basis of mutuality of interests and the sharing of responsibilities.

28. His delegation welcomed the recent initiatives, including those of the Bretton Woods institutions and the Group of Seven on practical approaches to resolving the problem of external indebtedness of the developing countries, including those in Africa. Without a determined effort along those lines, which included the holding of an international conference on the subject, prospects for economic growth and development in many developing countries would remain very poor. Other issues that must be addressed included the problems faced by developing countries, particularly those in Africa, concerning access to markets, capital and technology, unfavourable institutional arrangements and inadequate capacity for their meaningful integration into the world economy.

29. His delegation looked forward to the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 and other related agreements. The commitments, recommendations and measures agreed upon at recent major international conferences must be implemented in a spirit of mutual accountability and cooperation, and in a new global partnership addressing the critical social and economic issues of development. His delegation hoped that the Committee would adopt decisions to promote that spirit of partnership and shared responsibility.

30. Mr. DEL ROSARIO (Dominican Republic) said that, during its first two months in office, his country's new Government had taken steps to promote domestic and foreign investment. It was also placing special emphasis on transparency in the management of public finances and on combating corruption. His delegation fully supported the initiative of the United States of America to adopt a declaration against corruption and bribery which would call on Member States to criminalize illicit practices in international business.

31. His delegation also fully supported the measures to make the Committee's work more efficient and focused, both to increase its effectiveness and to make the best use of available resources.

32. Mr. GORITA (Romania) said that partnership, which was the key to the success of the globalization of the world economy, did not mean just partnership between developed and developing countries; it should encompass all the potential actors involved: intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations funds and programmes, the international financial institutions, employers' representatives and civil society. The efforts of countries themselves and rational macroeconomic policies remained the keystone of the partnership.

33. The series of major international conferences organized under the auspices of the United Nations since 1990 had created broad public awareness of the existence of global problems and of the fact that their solution required joint efforts by States and by all of the world's inhabitants. The conferences had heralded the new mandate for the United Nations in the twenty-first century: the task of coordinating efforts to solve global problems and thereby prevent the threats posed by climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, destruction of the earth's biodiversity, overpopulation, poverty, social exclusion, drugs and AIDS, all of which constituted threats to the security of the individual. The follow-up to the recent major international conferences should recognize that mandate and should encourage the adaptation of the structure of the United Nations to enable it to fulfil its new responsibilities. His delegation hoped that the resolutions to be adopted by the Committee would confirm that perception of the mandate of the United Nations. The task required political will, knowledge, patience, courage and inspiration, all of which were essential for the long-term effort required.

34. Mr. MONTOYA (Colombia) said that, given that serious questions were being raised regarding the future role of the United Nations in the area of development, the Committee was under pressure to prove its worth as the principal United Nations forum for addressing economic and development issues. It must intensify its efforts and should place special emphasis on macroeconomic

themes in order to allow the United Nations to re-establish its central role in development and to fulfil its mandate established in the Charter.

35. Noting that the international community had held a series of conferences to address such important issues as human rights, children, women, social development and the environment - to name but a few - he wondered whether it would be prepared to devote the same degree of attention and political commitment to such issues as the external economic environment, transfer of financial resources for development and transfer of technology, all of which were crucial to the development of the developing countries.

36. After touching briefly on the issue of economic growth and some of the reasons for the continued slow growth of the world economy, he said that it was increasingly being recognized that private capital flows were not a viable long-term solution. Growth and development which relied excessively on such flows had proven to be unsustainable.

37. The risk of marginalization was a constant concern of developing countries, and rapid globalization had increased their vulnerability to external forces. Instead of increasing well-being worldwide, globalization had had the opposite effect. Almost one third of the world's population lived on less than a dollar per day; 70 per cent lived on less than two dollars. It was necessary to devise a strategy to counteract a globalization process that was dominated by a handful of countries and companies, and that was, in fact, deepening economic disparities, damaging the environment and increasing poverty. It was paradoxical that, at a time when international monetary institutions had mobilized record amounts of financing to resolve economic crises caused by speculative ventures, more and more restrictions were being placed on flows of official development assistance which was intended to combat poverty. To believe that the free market was a panacea for all economic and social problems was not only a mistake but also an attempt to avoid fulfilling international commitments to development. It was up to the United Nations and other international institutions to reverse that situation.

38. Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia) said that while the economic advances in the developing countries were encouraging, the great majority of such countries remained trapped in a cycle of high poverty and low growth. His delegation was concerned that the enormous disparities between enormous affluence and absolute poverty were usually greeted by indifference. To ensure lasting growth and development in an era of globalization and liberalization, the international community must see to it that the external economic environment was placed on a more stable, predictable and fair basis. The United Nations had a unique role to play in the renewal of the partnership between the developed and developing countries based on mutual interests and shared benefits and responsibilities.

39. Reform of the United Nations had become imperative, and should also serve to enhance international economic cooperation for development. However, no reform would have any value unless the financial crisis threatening the very survival of the United Nations was reversed. A viable solution could be achieved, but only if all Member States abided by their obligations to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

40. There was an urgent need to conclude the agenda for development, which would serve as a comprehensive programme of action for the promotion of economic and social development. Its main goals - strengthening international cooperation for development, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system and promoting an integrated approach to development - were crucial for sustaining peace and prosperity. His delegation regretted that the agenda had not been finalized during the fiftieth session and hoped that the work would be completed at the current session.

41. Turning to sectoral issues, his delegation welcomed the important work of WTO in implementing the agreements resulting from the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, but believed that it should concentrate its attention on specific trade issues. As for financial flows, despite the liberalization of investment and the surge in international capital markets, only a handful of developing countries had benefited. At the same time, official development assistance had declined significantly, placing many developing countries in an untenable position. Accordingly ways of generating financial flows for development must continue to be sought. On the issue of external debt, Indonesia had long advocated a set of principles including a "once and for all" arrangement that addressed the vicious circle of underdevelopment, excessive indebtedness and lack of adequate resources. It welcomed the formal approval of the joint initiative of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund designed to reduce total debt levels of developing countries to sustainable levels.

42. Unfortunately, the new spirit of partnership invoked at the Conference on Environment and Development had not been matched by the necessary resources to translate the new commitments into reality. His delegation looked forward, therefore, to the forthcoming review on the implementation of Agenda 21 as a means to address the barriers to its effective implementation and to give renewed momentum to the process.

43. Mr. MOUSSA (Cameroon) said the widening gap between the rich and poor countries demonstrated that the development strategies adopted by the international community over the previous five years had been unsuccessful. That situation had been caused by the piecemeal approaches adopted in most of the strategies. Moreover there had not been sufficient political will to implement the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. His delegation had welcomed the decision to draft an agenda for development, which should not only refocus on the problem of development as a primary concern of the international community, but should also foster innovative and global approaches to development. However, enthusiasm over the agenda had waned because of the hardening of positions of some countries. In order to be credible, an agenda for development would have to take fully into account the special situation of Africa. In that connection, the conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s showed that the vast majority of African countries had met their commitments by undertaking difficult and often painful reforms. Significant actions, including the improvement of terms of access to the international market, increased investments and other financial flows, were now to be expected of the international community. Significant progress had been achieved, however, with respect to the external debt of developing

countries, with the adoption of more generous terms such as the Naples Terms and an initiative in favour of heavily indebted poor countries.

44. He welcomed the fact that the stage was set for the entry into force of the United Nations convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. The secretariat of the Convention must now be given the necessary financial resources. His delegation welcomed the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), especially its plan of action. The opening of a New York office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) was a source of immense satisfaction for his delegation. Efforts should now be made to regularize the situation of its Executive Director in line with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

45. Mr. KEBEDE (Ethiopia) said that, since many developing countries were still overdependent on primary commodities there was need for externally supported horizontal and vertical diversification mechanisms. In addition, it was imperative to expand the coverage of the Common Fund for Commodities and make its eligibility requirements more flexible. It was equally important to enhance access to foreign markets for the products of developing countries. In that connection, he called for the expansion of the produce coverage of the Generalized System of Preferences and for the upcoming ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization to take concrete action to support the ongoing efforts of least developed countries to diversify their economies and to boost export earnings as well as to implement the proposal to end all tariffs and quotas on imports from least developed countries.

46. A significant number of developing countries had not benefited from the recent upsurge in capital flows. Despite the fact that many African countries had taken measures to liberalize their investment laws and install other forms of institutional comparative advantage, only 2 per cent of foreign direct investment to developing countries had gone to Africa in 1996. Yet, foreign direct investment was urgently required in Africa and in the least developed countries for the rejuvenation of the industrial and agricultural sectors and for the effective implementation of structural adjustment programmes.

47. Efforts should also be made to help African States reduce their stock of external debt. Measures towards that end should go beyond debt rescheduling, and should include debt cancellation or conversion and other innovative schemes. In that regard, the conclusions of the recent summit of the Group of Seven major industrialized countries in Lyon were most welcome as was the recent initiative of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on the debt problem of the highly indebted poor countries.

48. While his delegation believed that every country must be responsible for its own development, the international community must assist in removing the exogenous economic factors that hampered the development efforts of developing countries. In that connection, the recent mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had clearly demonstrated the failure of the international community to meet the commitments it had entered into five years previously, to reduce and possibly eliminate external impediments and obstacles to Africa's socio-economic transformation. The United

Nations New Agenda, together with the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa, could provide a good framework for partnership in development. He hoped that Africa and the rest of the international community would make the best use of the coming five years to implement the lofty objectives of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

49. The remaining challenge was to implement the principles and plans of action adopted at the series of major United Nations conferences held in the 1990s. In that regard, one of the most important instruments for implementing the results of the various conferences and establishing structural links among them was an agenda for development. He therefore called on all member countries to strive hard to come up with a consensus document.

50. Mr. PRENDERGAST (Jamaica) expressed the hope that future negotiations on an agenda for development would provide a focused, positive and action-oriented outcome in keeping with the spirit of the Second Committee.

51. While recent major United Nations world conferences had identified some of the most fundamental and urgent problems in and obstacles to economic and social development, only an integrated system-wide approach to follow-up would bring success; otherwise the efforts which had been invested in those conferences would be to no avail. His delegation hoped that the Second Committee would continue to reflect, in its work and resolutions, the urgent need for follow-up and implementation to ensure that the processes which had begun at those conferences would move forward. While national Governments must play their part in implementation, only true multilateral cooperation would ensure results. The 1997 special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of Agenda 21 was of great importance to his country, which remained committed also to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. Jamaica recognized that national implementation should be in tandem with action by the international community.

52. The external debt problem remained the scourge of developing countries, particularly the least developed, as well as lower-middle and middle-income countries. Jamaica had been forced to divert much of its hard currency earnings to the repayment of foreign debt thereby leaving little for development activities. In that regard, his delegation supported recent initiatives such as the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa and the decision adopted at the recent annual meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to reduce the debt of the poorest countries, through the establishment and management, by the World Bank, of a trust fund.

53. During the current session, the Committee should strive to come up with concrete recommendations on how such issues should be addressed since they all had a bearing on the international agenda. Development could not be characterized only in economic terms, since there were also social and political aspects involved.

54. Mr. SHAHI (Nepal) said that the international economic environment had been undergoing profound changes in recent years, especially after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round. The successful liberalization and globalization of the world economy depended on the work of the newly established World Trade Organization

and the international trade regime created by the Final Act of the Uruguay Round. However, the promotion of liberal trade policies and globalization had not done anything to narrow the gap between developed and developing countries. Indeed, many African countries and least developed countries were being marginalized as a result of unfavourable markets for their exports. Furthermore, since many of the least developed countries lacked direct access to the sea and a significant market base, they could not offer any comparative advantage to foreign investors.

55. He was concerned about the declining level of official development assistance to developing countries and the shrinking resources for United Nations operational activities for development. In that connection, it was to be hoped that the first Ministerial Conference of WTO would come out with concrete measures in favour of the least developed countries, especially the landlocked countries. The Conference should ensure that the products of the least developed countries were given free and unrestricted access to world markets.

56. His delegation expected that the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 by the special session of the General Assembly in June 1997 would give a fresh impetus to the implementation of the Agenda through the allocation of new and additional resources. At the same time, industrialized countries must not deviate from the commitments they had made at major international conferences. While South-South cooperation was another component of international economic cooperation, it could not replace North-South cooperation in the foreseeable future. Stressing the importance of UNCTAD he noted that multilateral financial and development institutions should play a major role in devising additional special programmes for least developed countries in order to integrate them into the world economy. In that connection, he welcomed the emphasis placed by the leaders of the Group of Seven major industrialized countries at the Lyon Summit on the need to assist least developed countries and to integrate them into the global economy.

57. Mr. HABONIMANA (Burundi) said that more than 50 years after the founding of the United Nations, the gulf between rich and poor countries continued to widen. The United Nations was the only organization with sufficient moral and legal authority to galvanize the international community to combat poverty, and it was up to the Organization to procure the material and financial means required for that purpose. Proposals for reforming the composition of United Nations bodies and its global operation should give priority attention to halting the spread of poverty.

58. The developing countries were burdened by external debt, and measures such as rescheduling of debt, far from solving the problem, only prolonged their agony. The indebtedness of the least developed countries had prevented them from revitalizing or stabilizing their economies. His delegation therefore welcomed the measures that had been taken by the Group of Seven at the Naples and Lyon summits, to alleviate developing countries' debt problems, and called for their immediate implementation.

59. Unfavourable terms of trade continued to deprive poor countries of opportunities for development. While the volume of exports had increased

substantially in some countries, in others, particularly the least developed countries whose economies were dependent on commodities, the situation was not encouraging. In spite of regional trade agreements, the terms of trade had continued to deteriorate; in some cases market fluctuation, devaluation and the collapse of international exchange rates had destroyed decades of efforts. Protectionist measures continued to be imposed at a time when conditions were being attached to the already hard-to-obtain credits provided by the Bretton Woods institutions. The adverse balance of payments of many developing countries could not be redressed as long as commodity prices remained stagnant and under the control of powerful economies.

60. Developing countries would not be able to make substantial progress unless they had appropriate human and technological resources. Many countries with growing economies had succeeded by first making sustained investments in their human resources. Instead of exporting their experts, affluent countries should help developing countries train their own personnel. His delegation welcomed the establishment of such frameworks for cooperation as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the Special Initiative on Africa, and called upon donor countries to act upon the recommendations contained in those instruments.

61. Poor countries were aware that development was primarily their own responsibility. Regional integration and South-South cooperation continued to be promising. In that regard, his delegation thanked the United Nations for its support for the South Centre. However, South-South cooperation could develop only within the framework of viable and sustained economic and political integration. Moreover, regional economic integration could take place only in times of peace when there was no danger of attack from other countries, no fratricidal wars or ethnic confrontation. Harmonious regional development was unthinkable when millions of displaced persons were living in poverty and destabilizing the economic and political situation.

62. Racked by three years of civil war, Burundi was confronted with a disastrous economic situation. The embargo against that country only exacerbated that situation. Rather than enforce an embargo against an entire country, economic sanctions should be directed against those who favoured violence and were responsible for the massacres that had taken place. In order to protect innocent populations from the scourges of war and hunger, the international community should seek viable alternatives to the imposition of embargoes. That was why his delegation called for the immediate lifting of the economic blockade against Burundi.

63. Mr. ELMEJREBI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the developing countries particularly the countries of Africa were facing critical economic and social conditions and the most vulnerable sectors of the population were among the hardest hit. Even though the international community had adopted numerous resolutions to deal with the issue, little had changed.

64. Economic and technical cooperation among the developing countries represented an important means of promoting self-sufficiency. Since economic progress depended to a considerable extent on the availability of scientific and technological know-how, the international community should endeavour to help the

developing countries strengthen their national scientific and technological capabilities, institutions and personnel.

65. The first step that should be taken in that connection was to put an end to the coercive measures that some developed countries had taken in order to block the transfer of technologies and scientific know-how to certain developing countries.

66. His country believed that equitable economic relations were the key to international cooperation and to the establishment of a fair and non-discriminatory economic system. It had been hoped that the end of the cold war would be accompanied by greater economic cooperation but that had not occurred. Moreover, there had been a tendency to impose new trade barriers in the form of environmental and social preconditions linked to protectionist measures that distorted the multinational trade system and could have serious economic and social implications.

67. His delegation shared the concern of the majority of the international community, as reflected in the resolutions of the General Assembly and of the ministerial meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, which called for an end to the coercive measures used by some developed countries. Those measures were a violation of the principles of international partnership and were incompatible with the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, article 32 of which prohibited States from using economic, political or other measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights.

68. In spite of numerous resolutions calling on the international community to stop the developed countries from taking such coercive measures, some developed countries were still attempting to impose their will on peoples of the world, by declaring embargoes, freezing assets and blocking the transfer of technology and some had even enacted laws having extraterritorial application which was a violation of the sovereignty of other countries, of the Charter of the United Nations and of the rules of the World Trade Organization.

69. The United Nations should make every effort to foster economic and social development in the developing countries and to promote fairness and justice in the interests of the stability and growth of the world economy.

70. Mr. NGO QUANG XUAN (Viet Nam) said that, over the past few years, there had been some encouraging developments in the world economy. International and regional cooperation was growing in the context of the general trend of globalization. Countries had become increasingly aware of such pressing challenges as environmental degradation, high population growth, drug abuse, food shortages and conflicts. However, a large part of the world's population continued to live in conditions of absolute poverty, and the gap between developed and developing countries had continued to grow. Neo-protectionism had had a negative effect on international trade and cooperation, which was detrimental to the interests of the international community as a whole.

71. In the past five years, the United Nations had held a number of international conferences on issues of concern to the entire international

community. The United Nations, particularly, the Second Committee, had the capacity to mobilize and coordinate international efforts to alleviate the suffering of millions of people all over the world. In that regard, Member States should make greater efforts to finalize and implement the agenda for development. More resources should be allocated to development, and development strategies in support of African countries should be implemented in an effective manner. His delegation also commended the constructive recommendations made by various delegations concerning the promotion of international cooperation for development.

72. As a developing country, Viet Nam attached great importance to South-South and regional cooperation. The Government of Viet Nam had therefore signed and ratified the convention that had established the South Centre and would contribute actively to the Centre's effective operation.

73. In its economic and social development, Viet Nam had achieved significant results in both the economic and social fields. It had contributed to cooperation at the bilateral, regional and global levels and had been active in such United Nations bodies as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Viet Nam had played a constructive role in international conferences organized by the United Nations and was committed to the implementation of the outcomes of those conferences. Viet Nam was a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and was currently preparing to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

74. Mrs. RAZAFITRIMO (Madagascar) said that, in spite of positive political developments, the world economic situation continued to be marked by poverty, ignorance, sickness, environmental degradation and depletion of resources. The developing countries had to contend, in addition, with various forms of protectionism, as well as fluctuating commodity prices. The burden of debt continued to put a strain on their meagre resources for social and economic development projects. Studies of the net transfer of resources from developing countries had raised concerns about the volume and sustainability of private financial flows to medium-income countries, the decline of concessional aid to low-income countries, and the lack of net transfers from the private sector to Africa, which placed a greater burden on public sources of financing. Likewise, artificial obstacles to the transfer of technology continued to hinder industrial development in developing countries.

75. For countries like Madagascar, South-South and regional cooperation had become a necessary strategy for promoting national, regional and global development through collective autonomy, which was a basic tool for stimulating growth, technologies and accelerated development. Madagascar was involved in the Indian Ocean Commission and had participated in the work of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which united the countries of eastern and southern Africa. In addition, it would soon become a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

76. Her delegation welcomed the international community's efforts to redress the global economic situation. Recent achievements included the Midrand

Declaration and the recommendation of the Group of Seven at its June meeting in Lyon to reduce the burden of debt owed to multilateral institutions and to other bilateral creditors that were not members of the Paris Club. The major conferences that had been organized under the auspices of the United Nations and its institutions and agencies had underscored the need for a new and integrated approach.

77. There was a contradiction between the apparent mobilization of the international community to promote development, and the international community's inability to meet the challenges that it faced in that process. While solutions and remedies existed and were within arm's reach, the international community was marking time, engaging in verbiage to ease its conscience and continuing to produce highly sophisticated diagnoses, while at the same time it was loath to take even the simplest and most urgent measures.

78. There could be no peace without development, and peace could not be based solely on economic and political agreements between Governments; rather it should be based on mankind's intellectual and moral solidarity, which in turn was based on the cultural dimension that transcended national borders and promoted mutual understanding. The cultural dimension in the approach to development would help make it possible to view the world from other points of view, in particular to see it through the eyes of those who every day had to struggle against poverty, injustice and ignorance.

79. With regard to the role of the United Nations in development, it was important to respect the Organization's mandates and ensure that the planned reforms contributed to the declared objective of revitalization.

80. Mr. PEDROSO (Cuba) said that during the current debate, the renewal of economic growth in developing countries and the prospect of new opportunities resulting from the globalization and opening of markets had been exaggerated. While his delegation applauded the success achieved by some developing countries, it pointed out that growth in developing countries remained uneven. The situation in Africa remained critical and, in Latin America, the number of people living just above, and even below, the poverty line was increasing.

81. The second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II), had brought to an end the series of international conferences, and the results had yet to be implemented. It was now time to evaluate the recommendations of HABITAT II and ensure its follow-up, as well as the institutional strengthening of existing structures in that area. It was also time to consider the results of the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); the decisions regarding the strengthening of UNCTAD, the agreements establishing WTO, and the complementarity agreements signed between WTO and UNCTAD were part of a renewed endeavour to establish an international trade environment that was more stable, more predictable and subject to international standards.

82. At a time when imperial arrogance had prompted one Power to impose over the world a trade and investment policy that violated the most elementary standards of the Charter of the United Nations and international trade - as in the case of the United States Government's Helms-Burton Act directed against Cuba - the

entire international community could bear witness to the persistence of threats to the system of international trade.

83. His delegation attached great importance to the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly to evaluate the results of the implementation of the agreements adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It was still too early to predict the results of that session or to try to define the future form and programmes of the Commission on Sustainable Development. All chapters of Agenda 21, including the commitments regarding financial resources and the transfer of technology, as well as the outcome of the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, were part of a unique process and should be evaluated as such.

84. Many delegations had referred to the process concluded with General Assembly resolution 50/227 on the restructuring of the Organization's economic and social sectors. While his delegation also considered that that resolution should be fully implemented in order to close the cycle begun with Assembly resolution 48/162, it did not share the view that Assembly resolution 50/227 should serve as the basis for a new and deeper restructuring process. It was time to abandon the process of permanent restructuring in order to enable the United Nations to concentrate on fulfilling the mandates given to it by its Member States, particularly the mandates relating to development and international cooperation.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.